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To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/7/01 12:32pm
Subject: Microsoft Decision

It is appallling that Microsoft has received no real penallty after these years of litigation. They have continued monopolistic practices, and the condition of the settlement will increase them by allowing them to penetrate schools.

Their software is of poor quality, their business practices are beyond dubious, and surprisingly, their customer service, website, and support systems are not at all state of the art. (If you want to see good ones, try IBM, Lotus, Red Hat, Oracle.) As a computer professional, I dislike dealing with most of their products, and it upsets me when corporations as well as individuals are sucked into dealing with Microsoft. The reason we need government to intervene on behalf of the consumer is that consumers in general do not have the power to deal with large monopolistic organizations, nor the background to seek alternatives.

But aside from technical and professional considerations, these people are KNOWN to have broken US laws. So why are they not being punished? I see no incentive for them to improve their behavior.

Those of us involved in technology are doing what we can to encourage competition (this message is being written on a Red Hat Linux machine, for which I paid cash). But the overwhelming presence of Microsoft and its pressure on the consumer tend to make it impossible for other firms to develop and market software, either for the Windows operating system (because Microsoft hides the interface) or for other systems (because of the small size of the remaining market). In the long run this will cause grave harm to the software industry and will remove the motivation of our brightest people to innovate.

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